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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST
GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT
MAINTENANCE OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 26 September 1997 from the Permanent Representatives of Egypt and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a joint Russian-Egyptian declaration adopted during the talks held in Moscow on 23 September 1997 between Mr. B. N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, and Mr. H. Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 36, 37, 67, 71, 81 and 152 of the agenda, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. V. LAVROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

(Signed) Nabil ELARABY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Joint Russian-Egyptian declaration adopted in Moscow on 23 September 1997

I. WORLD SITUATION

1. Mr. B. N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, and Mr. H. Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, after considering the world situation, have concluded that opportunities are arising today for the formation of a qualitatively new system of mutual relations between States, a system which would be multipolar in structure and based on a partnership of equal rights and the consistent implementation of the principles and of the whole Charter of the United Nations in the interests of attaining peace and stability, improving the situation in the world and in individual regions and raising the standard of living of peoples. Coordinated international efforts are required so that peoples will be able to take advantage of the acceleration of the historical process and begin to use the achievements of science and technology in the interests of all mankind and of security and prosperity. The diversity of cultural and social values of peoples and civilizations must become an integral part of the common heritage of mankind. There is an urgent need for the observance of the generally recognized rights of man with full respect for national characteristics and cultural traditions.

2. World development must not take the path of expanding and strengthening military blocs and demarcating new lines of division, but must move towards the establishment of stable structures of international security on a collective basis.

3. The Russian Federation and Egypt are prepared to work together to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations. They greatly value the role played by the United Nations and its Security Council in the maintenance of peace, the settlement of existing international and local conflicts and the prevention of the emergence of new such conflicts. At the same time, when the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter, adopts a decision to impose sanctions, the damage resulting from the application of the sanctions, as well as the damage for third countries and neighbouring regions, must be kept to a minimum. The sanctions themselves must have time limits. The sanctions should, at the appropriate time, be eased and lifted as the resolutions of the Security Council are implemented.

4. What is needed is a comprehensive and balanced approach to questions of security and more energetic international cooperation to strengthen non-proliferation regimes, improve peacekeeping activities and reduce the danger of the outbreak of conflicts.

5. The Russian side notes the great positive potential in the proposal of President Mubarak for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and the means for their delivery.

6. The Egyptian side greatly appreciates the effort made by the Russian Federation to achieve further progress towards agreements with the United States of America on strategic arms limitation and the complete victory over nuclear confrontation.

7. Security and stability on the European continent are organically linked to security in the Mediterranean Sea, the Middle East and other adjacent regions, including the Black Sea. Ideas and practical actions to ensure security and stability in one region must be accompanied by measures in the same direction in other regions.

8. The Commonwealth of Independent States is an important factor for stability and development in Eurasia and in the world as a whole.

9. Both sides intend to participate actively in international efforts directed towards the intensification of cooperation in combating terrorism, trafficking in narcotics, money laundering and other activities of organized crime. They reaffirm their adherence to the decisions adopted at the high-level meeting held at Sharm El Sheikh in March 1996.

II. THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS AND THE SITUATION IN THE REGION

10. The Russian and Egyptian sides express their conviction that a lasting and comprehensive peace, stability and security must be guaranteed in the Middle East together with opportunities for the prosperity of all peoples living there. The basis for creating such conditions must be the readiness of all States firmly and steadfastly to abide by the principles of mutual respect, safeguarding of territorial integrity and independence and the exercise of the legitimate right of peoples to self-determination, as well as adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international agreements.

11. There has been significant progress in the peace process which began in Madrid in 1991. The way is open for a historic reconciliation between Arabs and Israelis on the basis of the principle of "land for peace". This principle must be implemented in a comprehensive manner. It is necessary to prohibit unilateral actions that might have a negative impact on the negotiating process, in particular the construction of settlements in the occupied territories.

12. The Russian Federation and Egypt call for an increase in international efforts to overcome difficulties standing in the way of a peaceful settlement. They believe it is necessary to ensure continuity in fulfilling all obligations that have been and will be specified within the framework of the Arab-Israeli talks, unconditional adherence by the parties to the Middle East settlement to the agreements reached and a willingness to implement them fully. The Russian Federation, as one of the sponsors, and Egypt, as one of the initiators of and principal participants in the Middle East peace process, intend to promote the resumption of and consequential continuation of the Arab-Israeli talks in all areas and on all outstanding problems.

13. The Russian side welcomed the important contribution made by Egypt to the search for mutually acceptable solutions in the peace process and confirmed the significance of the decision of the conference of the heads of State and Government of Arab countries held at Cairo in June 1996 under the chairmanship of President Hosni Mubarak, which stressed that peace is the strategic choice of the Arab States.

14. The Egyptian side expressed its appreciation for the constructive role played by the Russian Federation in promoting a Middle East settlement, satisfaction at the intensification of joint efforts undertaken by the co-sponsors with the United States of America and its cooperation with the States of the European Union and the international community in overcoming all difficulties and ensuring compliance with earlier agreements.

15. There is a close interrelationship between security and stability in the Middle East and the area of the Persian Gulf. The establishment of a lasting system of regional security in the Persian Gulf area that would take into account the interests of all countries of the region is a pressing task.

16. The Russian Federation and Egypt believe that it is necessary to continue to search for compromise solutions to the Libyan question that are consistent with international law.

17. Both sides drew attention to the need to preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. They advocated the prompt settlement of all outstanding questions in the "Iraqi file" and the restoration of Iraq's status as a full member of the international community to the extent that the relevant resolutions of the Security Council are implemented. The Russian Federation and Egypt consider that implementation of Security Council resolution 1111 (1997) of 4 June 1997 is of not only humanitarian but also great political significance and will foster an improvement in the climate surrounding Iraq.

III. RUSSIAN-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

18. The Russian Federation and Egypt base their bilateral relations on the principles of cooperation founded on equality and mutual trust, responsibility to the international community and coinciding or similar approaches to principal international problems.

19. The ties between the Russian Federation and Egypt that are developing in the economic, cultural, humanitarian and other spheres are based on mutual respect for the specific national and cultural characteristics of the two peoples and their traditions of friendship.

20. The Russian Federation views Egypt as a friendly Arab State that occupies a special place among the countries of the Middle East, Africa and the Mediterranean and is pursuing an active policy in world affairs.

21. Egypt considers the Russian Federation to be a great and friendly country which plays a highly significant and constructive role in international

relations and has long-standing cultural and historical ties to the peoples and countries of the Middle East, whose interests and aspirations it shares.

22. Both sides intend actively to use and strengthen the system of contacts that has been established at the summit and high levels. The heads of State and Government and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs shall continue their regular exchanges of views on questions pertaining to their bilateral relations and principal international problems.

23. The Russian Federation and Egypt reaffirm their firm intention to develop their trade, economic, cultural and scientific relations and believe that this area offers considerable unexplored opportunities.

24. Given the importance of intensifying the search for new forms of cooperation, including cooperation between representatives of business circles, both sides have agreed to hold an economic conference in Cairo in the autumn of 1998 to define a strategy for the development of economic relations between the Russian Federation and Egypt.

25. It was agreed to give further impetus to the work of the Joint Russian-Egyptian Commission on Trade and Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation and to the implementation of all bilateral understandings and agreements.

26. In the light of the foregoing, both sides look to the future with confidence and optimism, and look forward to a broadening of the horizons of their mutual relations in all fields.

For the Russian Federation:

B. YELTSIN

For the Arab Republic of Egypt:

H. MUBARAK